

modifying human mesenchymal stem cells to present said antigen by contacting human mesenchymal stem cells with said antigen in vitro, whereby said human mesenchymal stem cells process said antigen into an antigen fragment for presentation by said human mesenchymal stem cells; and

Administering to a host said modified human mesenchymal stem cells, thereby inhibiting a T-cell response to said antigen.

19. The method of Claim 18 wherein the antigen is an autoantigen.

20. The method of Claim 18 wherein the human mesenchymal stem cells are autologous to the host.

REMARKS

The claims have been amended in order to place the application in better form.

Claims 1-4 have been cancelled without prejudice and Claims 17-20 have been added. The fact that claims 1-4 have been cancelled without prejudice is not to be construed as an admission by Applicants or Applicants' attorneys that such claims are unpatentable, and Applicants reserve the right to prosecute such claims in a continuing application.

Applicants wish to express their appreciation to the Examiner for the telephone interview given to Applicants' attorney, Raymond J. Lillie, on July 17, 2001. During the interview, the possibility of amending claims in order to expedite prosecution of the above-identified application was discussed.

The present invention is directed to methods of inhibiting a T-cell response to an antigen by contacting T-cells with modified mesenchymal stem cells, or administering to a host human mesenchymal stem cells. The mesenchymal stem cells have been modified by contacting the mesenchymal stem cells with the antigen in vitro, whereby